

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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## A Windfall in Old Age

Under this heading the papers tell of the fortune of an old German market gardener in a New Jersey town, who after a life time of toil and poverty discovers that a deposit of seventy-five thousand dollars awaits him in a German bank. It appears that when he was four years old, his mother put \$4000 in that bank to be drawn by him when he was twenty-one years, but that, soon after, she died without disclosing the fact. Thru all the hard years of his laborious life this money was there, subject to his check. He did not enjoy it, because he did not know it was there for him. If he had known that it was there, it is inconceivable that he would have acted as if he did not know it. We have here an opportunity to study a phase of human nature in its relation to God's providence and God's love. The Infinite Love has laid by for us a various store of good things, which are ours on perfectly simple and reasonable conditions. As God's love and wisdom and power are without limit, and as his resources are also limitless, there can be, from his side, no limit to the blessing provided for us. If we are conscious of limits, if a sense of destitution and poverty oppresses us, if we are hedged in and denied, we must look for the reason in ourselves. Perhaps it lies in the poverty of our faith. If we held out full hands to a beggar, and that beggar should refuse to believe that we had anything for him, or that we really intended to give him what we cheerfully offered, doubtless our sympathy for him would give place to disgust for his idiotic behavior. If we are able to bestow a limitless bounty upon a famine struck community, upon the simple conditions that they should ask for it in the first place, and thank us for it afterward, refuse to perform these conditions might well chill the warm breath of our philanthropy. Sane men who know that they have deposits of money in a good bank do not act as if they did not know it, but this attitude toward God's provision for us is usual, so much so that it doesn't carry with it a suggestion of insanity. Society is not willing to admit that a great majority of its members are insane, and yet what other conclusion can we reach when this majority voluntarily endure lives of poverty and misery, when they might enrich themselves with God's infinite bounty. Take for example what we may call the main object of human pursuit, which is happiness. According to the popular conception it is to be found in the possession of wealth. And so the vast multitudes rush after the gilded phantom, forgetting that experience denies the power of money to command happiness, and forgetting, moreover, that what small measure of gross satisfaction may be derived from it, is liable to vanish at any moment, and will certainly vanish at the termination of this brief life. On the other hand God offers to us a happiness which no circumstances can impair, which is so full in its measure and so satisfying in its character as to leave nothing to be desired, and which instead of terminating with the earthly life sweeps on into the eternities like a widening and deepening river sweeping into the sea. And yet what proportion of

sane men and women renounce the ephemeral delusion for the reality?

The old German must regret that so much of his life has been lived in ignorance of his good fortune, and so many opportunities to enjoy it have forever passed away. Only a few years remain, and moreover his life of poverty and toil has denied him the cultivation of those tastes and accomplishments which wealth is especially adapted to gratify. A regret analogous to this has come to many a man who turned to God only in his old age, cloyed with the world's pleasures, disgusted with its vanities, and distressed even in his conversion on account of the absence of those rare spiritual sensibilities, of beautiful fellowship with God, of the warm glow of love, of that sweet peace which is unspeakable, faculties, all, which cannot be so easily brought into fullness of life and power after having been trampled upon and suppressed thru all the godless years of youth and strong manhood. Old age may in God's mercy come into possession of the "unspeakable gift," but there will ever be the haunting memory of the years that have been wasted. Not even the title to everlasting life and eternal glory can recall those years. All that they might have contained of joy, and power, and usefulness, and fruitfulness, is lost, beyond recovery.

Another lesson comes to us from the narrative of the old German gardener. Despite whatever there might have been of weariness, disappointment, and discouragement in his long life, the fact yet remains that the great fortune awaited him. Perhaps you will say that his case is an isolated one; but it is not isolated. From whatever point we may start in life, whatever circumstances may environ us, or possibly hinder us, straight up before every young man or young woman stretches a path which leads to an estate, an affluence, a wealth, beside which the gold of a thousand banks is but the rubbish of a hovel. Steadfastly walk that high way, and it will conduct you to the gate of a palace. We may make our troubles, our sorrows, our poverty, our toil, our disappointments, our weariness, as transitory as the fleeting clouds which pass swiftly by, and let again the glory of the sun flood earth and sky. An indisputable title testifies to every child of God that "all things are yours." Let us live in the confidence and consciousness of this wealth. Let it broaden our minds, broaden our lives, expand our sympathies, enlarge our hearts, and fill us with a sense of that worth and dignity which befits a child of God, so richly endowed.

## Cross the Line

We think of death as the line which divides between misery and happiness; and whatever our experience may be in this pilgrimage, whatever of profound sorrow and deep disappointment, we look forward to the time when, with this "mortal coil," we will leave behind us the shadows and the clouds, and enter into "the world beautiful." But why should the Christian postpone his joy? Where Christ is there are unfailing delights, and Christ may even now be in our hearts, if but our hearts are open for his incoming. And with Christ in our hearts we will think that we have already crossed the line which separates between the world's misery and heaven's bliss.